

RECENT LITERATURE.

Connery's 'Governmental Problems in Wild Life Conservation.'—This volume¹ is one of the publications of the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, the author being an instructor in the Department of Government of that institution. He states that as the problems considered are governmental they are "ripe for the consideration of students of government as well as for the professional biologist" and therefore he feels that no apology is needed for "invading a field which at first glance appears to belong exclusively to the natural sciences."

In his introduction the author defines conservation, as he understands it, as the protection of all species "from destruction and their quantity increased unless it can be clearly demonstrated that a particular species is destructive of property out of all proportion to its possible value to society." In the following ten chapters he considers: the changing place of wild life in the national economy; the sphere of Federal and of State Government in wild life conservation; the organization and functions of the Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries; the reorganization of Federal conservation agencies; organization and functions of State conservation departments; problems of game law enforcement and conclusions.

In the first he outlines the agricultural problems of the nation and the present administration's proposed policy of turning a considerable portion of farm land into forest ("land planning") and the inevitable increase in wild life. He considers that "wild life is offered the best chance of increase that it has had for many a year" but points out that "whatever steps are taken to aid wild life conservation must be made to fit into the constitutional pattern of our government system."

Following this he discusses the sphere of Federal and State Government in conservation, tracing the matter from the earliest actions down to the present time with an abundance of quotations and legal references. Then comes a history of the organization and activities of the Biological Survey and of the Bureau of Fisheries. The true function of the Survey he defines as "the protection of the wild game and fur animals as a natural resource in which the whole nation has certain rights." This history makes interesting reading especially the concise account of the various activities of the Bureau. He stresses the varied interests that have tried to influence the work of control and protection and concludes that "the most difficult problem confronting the Survey is to maintain a balance" between these various groups. The agricultural and grazing interests clamor for the destruction of animals injurious to crops the "naturalist groups" contend that the duty of the Survey is "protecting wild life not destroying it," while between is the sportsman's group which is chiefly interested in "more game birds." But even the sportsmen are divided; one section argues that the hunting season should be shortened while the other representing the arms and ammunition makers demands that hunting restrictions be relaxed.

While the author considers that, according to his interpretation of conservation, a measure of control is justified, he feels that "the Survey as a conservation agency should be more actively engaged in research and experimentation relative to the raising of animals in captivity . . . the present commercial value of fur animals and the future possibilities of the industry demand that greater attention be given to this field." He adds that "it is [not] to be wondered that in all this welter of conflicting views the Survey sometimes loses sight of its chief objective, conservation of

¹ *Governmental Problems in Wild Life Conservation.* By Robert H. Connery, Ph.D., Instructor, Department of Government, Columbia University. New York Columbia University Press (2960 Broadway, New York City) 1935. Pp. 1-250. Price \$3.25.

wild life as a national resource." Under the subject of reorganization he draws attention to the tangle of confiction in the activities of various Federal groups of which Chief Darling of the Survey has so often spoken and quotes President Hoover to the effect that "our industries and business are badgered to death for duplicate information by a host of non-coordinating agencies."

In his conclusions the author says that the Nation is committed to conservation, that State and Federal Governments seem willing to cooperate and that there are remarkably few legal restrictions to conservation activities. There is need, he says, for more satisfactory data on the subject and defects in administrative organization and "if one were to sum up in a single phrase the greatest problem of conservation in the future it would be how to protect the rights of the many against the greed of the few."

While many instances of political interference with the prosecution of offenders against the game laws are mentioned there is another sort of political interference with conservation which apparently is not given the attention that it deserves doubtless due to the impossibility of obtaining the necessary facts in the case. We, on the outside, cannot but feel that in more than one instance the officers of the Biological Survey have not been able to follow their own judgment in matters of game protection and in limiting control measures, because of pressure from "higher up" instigated by politics. How this is to be prevented it is difficult to say.

It is refreshing to have the whole matter of wild life conservation discussed by someone entirely outside of its activities, someone not interested in either side of the various controversies that have arisen, and someone whose position does not depend upon the attitude that he may take and who is free from political pressure of any sort.

There is such a wealth of historical and legal information in Mr. Connery's book and such an abundance of authoritative references that we hope everyone interested in conservation will read it, especially those who may contemplate improvement in laws or in administration. Furthermore it is written in such a way as to hold one's attention from cover to cover, with a clarity of diction and presentation that is surprising in such a work. The author deserves the thanks of all who are interested in the future of our wild life.—W. S.

The London Convention for the Protection of African Flora and Fauna.—

A special publication of the American Committee for International Wild Life Protection presents a full account of the London Convention composed of representatives of Governments having possessions in Africa, viz.: The Union of South Africa, Belgium, Great Britain, Egypt, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The provisions agreed upon include the protection as complete as possible with special permission to hunt, kill or capture only to further important scientific purposes and only granted by the highest authority in the territory, of a list of seventeen species or groups of mammals and three birds—Shoe-bill Stork, Bald-headed Ibis and White-breasted Guinea Fowl. Thirteen other mammals and nine birds while not so rigorously protected, are not to be hunted, killed or captured without special license from the competent authorities, these birds being the Maribou Stork, Ground Hornbills, Ostrich, Secretary Bird, the several species of Egret and the Buff-backed Heron.

This is the most important move ever made toward the saving of the wonderful fauna of the African continent which was being so ruthlessly decimated by unprincipled hunters and through the opening up of the country. A list of the national parks and game preserves already established by the several governments is appended, most of them complete preserves but on some of them hunting under special permit